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POLITICAL FOLLIES AND MORAL CHECKS.

BEING A NEW WORD FOR PEACE.

BY WALTER CHANNING, M. D.

A nation may make itself as ridiculous as may an individual. Folly would seem to be a born privilege of the race; and who of its million numbers has parted with the right to be foolish? However the truth may be of these aphorisms, the voluntary, open-eyed exercise of the privileges referred to, is not often met with; and the negative virtue of not pressing them, is of somewhat wide claim. There is good in this. A man, and a State pass reputably enough by not outraging all common decorum, or violating all common sense. Many men, and many States demand little more. Who can look at the actual condition of this country in the direction of national character, without being profoundly impressed with the thought, that it has almost reached the farthest limit of public folly? Who can read,—to hear it were insufferable,—who can read the “doings” of Congress, which come to us by every post, and not feel his cheek burn, at the national disgrace which they every where, and every day proclaim? Men have grown mad in the uses of the power which has been placed in their gripe, and look for new experiments with it, as if it were their own, and to be used only for self-aggrandizement. They have stolen Texas, and now forsooth they would buy Cuba. They are about to take possession of Oregon, or defer that, “for the present;” and as to California, that must be theirs, seeing that some discontented portions of the Oregon emigration are on the march to that distant region. Why not *possess* the Continent at once up to the Panama Isthmus, cut a canal across that, and set up toll-gates at the Pacific and Atlantic? The new postage bill works badly; why not make up the *deficit* by the Panama toll?

Another phasis in the national manifestation of its “native” folly, is seen in the war fever of the day. Much of this has been brought out by the bloodless conquests of other people’s property; or rather by the determination to steal more, in a case in which there is a party to the crime, which does not mean to sit by quietly, and see itself robbed. Resistance to so cool a theft, has raised the national thermometer of folly to fever heat. Statesmen, Senators and all, are uttering cannon shot in almost every breath. The holidays, and winter to boot, bring no cooling power to this hot artillery, and it would almost seem that if England, or somebody, or something else, did not soon step in, and take up the glove, that we should have incontinently to go to fighting among ourselves. Yes,

verify in this nineteenth century of the christian era, the veracious mythic of the Kilkenny cats.

Thanks to the great doctrine, and to the great fact, of compensations among nations, as well as among individuals, there is a power amongst us stronger than the "throne," which begins to utter its deep, its sublime, its thunder tones for Peace. That power is moral power. Upon the moral world it exerts itself as does gravitation upon the physical. It preserves the order of the intellectual universe. As does gravitation, so does the moral law permit a certain amount of aberrations, variations, and a narrow observer of both looks for the destruction of two worlds. But the law allows of a limited transgression only. The planets return, yes, come back again to their old places. "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther," says the law to each. And such is the word of the law which governs the moral universe. In the exercise of the power to do wrong which is involved in the freedom to do right, there may be war among the nations. But even here the moral power declares itself, and commands peace. War may be threatened. The moral law forbids it, and peace is preserved. Thanks to this moral power, which though at one time it seems small, as was that cloud to the prophet's eye,—no larger than a man's hand,—but which so soon covered the heavens,—thanks to that moral power which has place and life, even in the large natural folly of the times; for in its being, and outward breathings, we see and feel that which shall be for the saving of the nation. Beneath its power quails the unmanly, the unholy, the coward spirit of war. We just learn that Cuba is not to be bought yet,—that its purchase is "for the present" deferred. Oregon may wait a little for *annexation*; and the wild cattle of California may keep their skins whole, and on, a while longer, at least for all us. Do you know whence these changes have proceeded. Peace, its everlasting obligation, its authoritative word, has been heard, and the wildest fanatic for war forbears speech somewhat. The power of peace is felt because it rests on itself alone. It is not mixed with baser matters; nay, it is not blended with other, he no-blest reforms of the day. It is felt to be the common duty of men, however, having other interests in strongest antagonism. It is known to be the condition of all other virtue. It is the handmaid of all other movements for the truest social honor, an exceeding blessing. Peace is heard. The Washington Treaty, abused as it is by the popular press of the day,—the Washington Treaty commends itself in its great dignity, and sublime truth, to the people of this wide nation; and the wisdom words of Washington and Franklin, touching the great question of extending without limit, and without principle, the national territory, are beginning to be heard and to be heeded. We are old fashioned enough to believe that Christianity, in its great and distinctive doctrines of peace, and of

the brotherhood of the race, has deep place in the condemnation of war, which is coming up on every side. Thanks be to those Senators, and Representatives in the present Congress, who have spoken for peace. We ask not for motives. We demand of them no reasons for their defence of peace. We know that in this greatest national blessing there is laid up that which shall be for everlasting, and for the widest good. Give love to man, free play among the nations,—give reverence for humanity, the divine in man, true place in the world, and you have made provision for the highest moral developement, for the purest freedom.

It is grateful to be permitted in these hours of changing opinion, and unstable rumor, to look at the brighter side of the prospects of the time. There is a hope full of immortality. It is that hope which rests upon stable principles, and which recognizes them in the moral nature of man. Let a man never despair while in the deep readings of his own heart he reaches truths which have true harmonies with the word of God, with His blessed providence, with His discipline of human life. These are to him his rights, his joy, his exceeding peace. He mourns that men or nations can find occasion in the universe of God for violating, or for forgetting his law, or his love. He thanks his Father for the moral liberty which he has granted to his children. He mourns that in the consciousness of such a possession, they can for a moment voluntarily abuse it.

MILITARY REPUTATION.

There is no one subject on which men have been more wicked than in regard to war. There has been no one subject on which they have been, and are, more befooled. There is no one thing on which the sentiments of the world are more certainly destined to a change. There is no one thing on which so much reputation has been gained, in reference to which the estimate of the world is to be reversed. There is no one thing in which praises are so certainly to be changed to execrations. There is no one thing in which the opinions which history records are so certainly destined to be set aside. There is no one thing in which there is to be such a revolution in the whole nomenclature, as that which is to be applied to the names, *glory*, and *fame*, and *military renown*. The man who dies, or has died, or shall hereafter die, with only a *military reputation*, is destined either to be ultimately forgotten, or to be remembered with dishonor.—*Rev. A. Barnes.*